

President's Budget Message – Commissioner Marilyn Brown 2015 Budget Adoption 12/16/2014

2014 has been a year of great accomplishment and change and, of course, challenge; a year in which I have been honored to serve as Board President.

Franklin County is in a league of its own these days.

- Fastest growing metro county in the state,
- Home to 5 Fortune 500 companies, 62 colleges and university campuses,
- o #1 ranked library, zoo and science center in the nation,
- One of very few counties in the Midwest and throughout the nation that have a double-Triple A bond rating.

We've worked hard to achieve these accomplishments and I'm proud that our position of fiscal security has allowed us to promote job creation, and community safety, and to provide health and human services and plan for the future.

I would like to personally thank our now-retired-Administrator, Don Brown, for his contributions to our successes in 2014 as well as the past nine years and for coming in today to close out another county budget process.

Let me briefly share with you what I'm most proud of this year:

Our efforts related to creating job opportunities and training have been robust.

County's announcement of the **new Infrastructure Works** program, which will equip communities throughout our County with a competitive edge when it comes to generating economic development. Infrastructure Works will position local governments to be able to provide gap financing on job creation projects to 'get the deal done.' This is a huge accomplishment for our job seeking residents and expanding or relocating businesses.

The County hosted and partnered on a number of **job fairs** including those for veterans and child support obligors which connected hundreds of job seekers this year with hiring employers in Central Ohio.

We also prioritized important after school programs and paid summer internship experiences which instruct and prepare youth for future employment.

The Commissioners advanced our efforts as they relate to reentry to ensure that those returning to our community have a chance at success, to be productive and to avoid returning to jail. As the Chair of Franklin County's Reentry Coalition, I was honored to participate in a series of meetings on Capitol Hill to discuss new efforts to reduce the number of people with mental disorders in jails and set the stage for unprecedented change in our community.

Franklin County is the fastest growing county in the state of Ohio. That **growth brings immense challenge.**

 Franklin County continues to lead the state in infant mortality and poverty.

The 2015 budget seeks to address the challenges before us and plan for the future.

- General Revenue Fund budget is \$397.4 million
- All Funds budget is \$1.4 billion

Delivering direct services...

The County's department of Job and Family Services, led by Director Anthony Trotman administers assistance and supports programs that impact the lives of hundreds of thousands of individuals, families, and children residing in Franklin County. In 2015:

- Billions (\$1.9 billion in 2014) to be administered for family health care assistance, helping hundreds of thousands of adults and children (289,000/mo. average in 2014) each month;
- Administer hundreds of millions (\$243 million YTD in 2014) to provide food assistance to hundreds of thousands (209,000 recipients per month in 2014) of residents;
- \$50,000 for Charitable Pharmacy of Central Ohio to provide prescription and non-prescription medicines to eligible residents regardless of their ability to pay
- \$200,000 for Maternal Instincts Program in Whitehall to increase access to prenatal care and reduce infant mortality.

These efforts are designed to provide temporary support for people in need of life stability and assistance as they work to emerge from poverty.

Forging strong community partnerships...

In 2015, Franklin County will continue to deliver services each day which directly improve the lives of people who have fallen on difficult times, or face extraordinary circumstances.

- County funds homeless and housing organizations to ensure residents have somewhere safe and warm to rest their head. New in 2015 is an additional \$2.4 million, an increase of 9.1-percent, to encourage affordable housing and apartments for residents in overlooked areas of the County.
- Continuation of new local food policy programs including the Columbus-Franklin County food action plan, and Veggie SNAPS, a collaboration with local Farmer's Markets to make fresh, healthy foods available to all residents of our county, regardless of income.

Strengthen the economy/sales tax base...

Nearly 65-percent of the County's 2015 General Revenue Fund will be supported by the sales tax. Being able to adequately serve our growing population means ensuring sales tax collections remain strong so a priority for this Board next year will continue to be supporting and growing local businesses and retailers.

The county's flagship investment program for growing the economy, **Smart Works in Franklin County**, was introduced earlier and has already achieved significant results for the regional economy. Next year, my colleagues and I will unveil **additional programs focused on green**

energy and workforce development which will complement our Smart Works suite of already existing programs.

We will also continue to invest in:

- Columbus-Franklin County Finance Authority partnership has allowed the issuance of \$592 million in bond financing projects that will invest more than \$741 million and create 4,956 jobs in Central including the:
- Workforce Training Investment Grants (WITG)
 - IBM, Quantum Health, and others have generated commitments of approximately 1,000 jobs and retention of hundreds of other jobs.
- Making increased investments in current partners like Experience Columbus.
 - Travel and tourism is an \$8.7 billion industry, employs 71,000 and offsets taxes for families by over \$2,200.

Central Ohio benefits from being home to museums and attractions like COSI, Franklin Park Conservatory and the Columbus Museum of Art, to hosting world famous events like the Quarter Horse Congress and Arnold Classic.

We are continuously working to ensure these local and regional attractions show up on the travel and tourism map.

In doing so, we can generate jobs and opportunity.

Prepare for the future...

We'll also make a strong commitment to our children and young people.

In neighborhoods where one parent families struggle to find housing and hold down hourly wage jobs, community organizations and programs provide the encouragement and support needed to fill the gaps and pave the road to success.

- The Franklin County Pathways to Prosperity, a partnership with the County, Reynoldsburg High School and the Electrical Trades Center provides graduates with credentials to start careers.
- Mechanic Internship Program partnership between Fleet Management and Columbus State
- Youth Lemonade Day program teaches young adults business skills
- Franklin County continues to host Work Study students from Cristo Rey High School providing the youth with valuable hands on experience.
- And we fund the Ohio Alliance for Arts Education's Artists-in-Schools and Transit Arts--that teach kids the beauty of art, creation and critical thinking.

And we can be better prepared to protect our county for future generations.

In 2015, County Commissioners will continue the planning and undertaking for a new **Public Safety Center** to house the operations of the Sheriff and Coroner on the County's Westside because planning for the future safety and security of this community are important endeavors.

In fact, safety and security are a top priority for this Board of Commissioners and again, this year, over 60-percent of the County's Operating Budget will be directed to support the operations of the County Sheriff's Office as well as the operations of the Courts.

And, while the year is coming to a close, I am eager to move this budget forward so that we may continue our important work into the New Year.

Conclusion...

I want to offer my thanks to our entire Franklin County team;

We also have some of the best Administrators in the state – **Don (Brown), Ken (Wilson), Erik (Janas) and Kris (Long),** thank you for the counsel you provide to the Commissioners and the leadership and guidance you share with the agencies you manage.

And, finally, to **the entire OMB team, thank you** once again for your hard work to pull together a budget this community can be proud of. It is a privilege to get to work with you each of you and I'm proud of all our hard work and collaboration on behalf of the residents we serve.

Thank you.